

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7411

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

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AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: ELECTION ROUND-UP

1. ELECTORAL LISTS: WITH NOMINATION DAY SET FOR JUNE 6, THE MAJOR PARTIES HAVE ANNOUNCED MOST OF THEIR CANDIDATES. BOTH THE SLFP AND THE UNP WILL CONTEST ALMOST ALL OF THE 168 SEATS, BARRING 10-15 IN THE TAMIL NORTH AND A FEW LEFT EMPTY FOR TACTICAL REASONS. THE UNITED LEFT FRONT WILL BE CONTESTING 120 WITH SEVERAL ALLIES ACCOUNTING FOR ANOTHER VIE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR SURPRISES; FOUR (OF 19) MINISTERS WILL NOT BE CONTESTING. NEW CANDIDATES FROM THE BANDARANAIKE CLAN WILL BE THE PM'S SON, ANURA, AND COUSIN, ANURUDDHA RATWATTE. AN ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTORAL LISTS WILL FOLLOW THEIR FINALIZATION NEXT WEEK.

2. NEW PARTIES: THE ELECTION COMMISSIONER HAS ANNOUNCED

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THE RECOGNITION OF ONLY TWO NEW PARTIES FROM THE 31 APPLICANTS. BOTH THE TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT AND THE CEYLON WORKERS CONGRESS (AN INDIAN PLANTATION WORKERS UNION) WERE ADDED TO THE LIST OF SEVEN PARTIES ALREADY RECOGNIZED. CANDIDATES FROM THE NUMEROUS NON-RECOGNIZED PARTIES (INCLUDING THE EX-INSURGENT JANATA VIMUKTI PERAMUNA) WILL NOT HAVE AN ASSURED ELECTORAL SYMBOL AND WILL HAVE TO PAY A LARGER DEPOSIT.

3. TWO PARTIES DISSOLVE: THE DUDLEY PERAMUNA - A SPLINTER GROUP FROM THE UNITED NATIONAL PARTY WHICH HAD FORMED LAST YEAR AROUND EXPELLED M.P. RUKMAN SENANAYAKE - IS NOW DEFUNCT. SENANAYAKE IS STILL FRUITLESSLY SEEKING UNP NOMINATION AND, OF HIS TWO MAJOR SUPPORTERS, ONE WILL BE CONTESTING ON THE SLFP TICKET AND THE OTHER WILL RUN AS AN INDEPENDENT, UNCONTESTED BY THE SLFP. THE ECCENTRIC SRI LANKA VIMUKTI BALAVEGAYA HAS ALSO BEEN WOUND UP -- AT LEAST FOR THIS ELECTION -- BY THE DECISIONS OF ITS TWO MP'S THAT NEITHER WOULD BE RUNNING THIS YEAR.

4. PLANTATION SCENE: THE UPCOUNTRY TEA PLANTATION AREAS CONTINUE TO BE THE SCENE OF POLITICALLY-INSPIRED SINHALESE-TAMIL RACIAL TENSIONS. REPORTS THAT THE CONTROVERSIAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLANTATION LAND TO SINHALESE VILLAGERS HAD BEEN POSTPONED WERE VEHEMENTLY DENIED BY AGRICULTURE MINISTER HECTOR KOBBEKADUWA WHO PROMISED THAT THE SCHEME WOULD GO AHEAD IN THE CONSTITUENCY CONTESTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S SON. KOBBEKADUWA HAS ALSO BEEN QUOTED TO THE EFFECT THAT TAMIL LEADER (AND CANDIDATE HIMSELF) S. THONDAMAN SHOULD BE DEPORTED TO INDIA. MEANWHILE THE STATE PLANTATIONS CORPORATION IS PROMISING MORE JOBS IN THE TEA ESTATES AND THE SLFP ELECTION MANIFESTO PROMISES 350,000 NEW JOBS IN THE TEA, RUBBER AND COCONUT ESTATE SECTOR. THE PRESENT TAMIL LABORERS ARE LIKELY TO QUESTION WHAT THIS PORTENDS FOR THEIR FUTURE.

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